

# PSW NEWSLETTER

## Lynda Nichols wins OCHU PSW of the Year award

Lynda Nichols was awarded the Outstanding PSW of the Year award at OCHU's annual convention in April. Lynda is a member of CUPE 2628 at Northumberland Hills Hospital.

According to one of her nominators, Lynda embodies patient-centered care, approaching every individual with unwavering kindness, dignity, and respect.

Her ability to build trust and meaningful connections with patients and their families is unmatched, creating a sense of comfort in even the most challenging situations.

Lynda has been the recipient of the hospital's *Gift of Gratitude* multiple times, which is awarded when a patient or their family makes a donation to the hospital honouring a staff member.

Lynda is a pillar of teamwork and reliability. She consistently goes above and beyond her duties, stepping in to support colleagues without hesitation and always prioritizing the well-being of both patients and staff. Her keen attention to detail, initiative, and problem-solving skills make her an invaluable member of any healthcare team.



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# PSWs deserve to be regulated the same way as other health care professionals

Last year, the Ontario government created a PSW regulatory body that is highly flawed and does not provide the same rights to personal support workers as are accorded to other health care professionals.

In April, OCHU held a meeting with Kathy Wilkie, CEO of the Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority (HSCPOA) to reiterate our objections about the new regulatory plan, which are listed below.

## **PSWs are not represented on the board of directors**

Unlike other professionals (nurses, for example) PSWs are not represented on the board. The College of Nurses of Ontario has numerous nurses on its board.

## **The CEO can arbitrarily revoke PSWs' licenses**

There are several ways in which HSCPOA denies due process to PSWs. For instance, *the CEO of HSCPOA has the power to arbitrarily revoke a PSW's right to practice* - with workers having no right to appeal the decision.



## **PSWs are excluded from Discipline & Appeals committees**

PSWs are excluded from sitting on the Discipline and Appeals committees. This is wrong and offensive and is not in line with the standards for other regulated professions. For example, registered nurses are represented on the College of Nurses' Discipline Committee.

## **There is no right to full written reasons for committee decisions**

Unlike other professionals, PSWs don't have the same rights to a written decision with detailed reasons for any decisions made concerning a PSW's practice. It is not clearly expressed that PSWs have the right to call evidence and to cross examine witnesses.

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## OCHU challenges unfair regulations for PSWs (cont.)

### HSCPOA has the authority to impose fees on PSWs

We are extremely concerned about fees being imposed on PSWs considering the existing burden of low wages.

Although currently PSWs are not required to pay for registration, the legislation governing HSCPOA clearly contemplates the imposition of fees.

For example, in regulations of the legislation, there are provisions that deal with fees being payable with registration applications, suspension for non-payment of fees, etc.



### Sign our petition

OCHU supports PSWs' right to self-regulation, as long as they are provided the same rights as those accorded to health care professionals.

Send a message to Premier Doug Ford and the Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, calling on them to amend legislation to ensure fair regulations for PSWs:

[www.cupe.ca/psw-rights](http://www.cupe.ca/psw-rights)

**Have you been told by your employer that you must register with HSCPOA or face termination?**

Our advice to you if you are threatened with termination is to join HSCPOA but to make sure that your local union grieves the policy requiring you to join.

Please visit [ochu.on.ca/psw-campaign](http://ochu.on.ca/psw-campaign) to read the grievance language and get more details on our campaign.



# "Why I became a PSW"

OCHU members share their perspectives on providing care as personal support workers

## **Mariah Paxton**

I decided to become a PSW due to a desire to make a meaningful difference in people's lives, especially those who need assistance with daily tasks due to illness, aging, or disabilities.

As a PSW, I provide essential care, offering not only physical support but emotional encouragement and companionship. It's a role that requires patience, empathy, and a strong sense of responsibility.

I often form close bonds with the patients, providing emotional and psychological support during tough times.

I listen, offer comfort, and help people cope with physical or mental health challenges.

The job can be incredibly rewarding because it directly impacts people's well-being, allowing them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We also offer relief to family members who might be caregivers; allowing them to take a break and reduce the stress of caregiving responsibilities.

As PSWs, we work alongside nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals providing valuable input on the patient's conditions.

My first-hand experience with patients allows me to report changes in health, helping with early intervention or adjustments in care plans. As they say "PSW's are often the eyes and the ears of patient care."

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# "Why I became a PSW"

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In essence, we play an integral part in delivering compassionate, hands-on care that directly impacts the well-being of individuals, making us an essential component of the healthcare team.

### Sue Burnell

I worked as a home care PSW for many years, working mainly with palliative patients. I spend a great deal of time with patients who were dying, helping them live their last days at home – a preference for most people. I loved being there for my patients but it tore me apart every time someone passed away.

In 2011, my worlds collided when I was informed that my mother was terminally ill with pancreatic cancer. There was no cure for her.

My mother requested that she stay home until the end and had me look after her. Through the turmoil and anguish, I had to find a way to perform as a PSW and a daughter.

I spent three months at home with my mother and was her primary care giver.



Although it was an exceptionally difficult time, I would not exchange that period for anything. It gave me the opportunity to get to know my mother in a way I never knew her before. My heartbreak was still as heavy as any daughter, but I was grateful that I could fulfil her last wishes.

Being a PSW gave me the skills and ability to care for my mother. I love being a PSW and I can't point to one thing that makes this true for me, but that memory definitely stands out.

# One final dance

Agnes Caspersz writes about the time she helped an elderly patient at her hospital enjoy a precious moment with his wife

At my hospital, my team members and I had to assist an elderly disabled resident in sharing one final dance with his wife on their wedding anniversary.

With gentle support, we helped him stand with a walker, and together, they swayed to the music, their love evident in every step.

It was a beautiful and intimate moment, and the joy and peace on his face were unforgettable.

Watching the couple share this last dance was a reminder of why I do this work - providing comfort, dignity, and creating lasting memories in some of life's most precious moments.



# OCHU PSW Committee

If you have any questions or concerns related to PSW issues please reach out to a member of our committee.



**Susan Burnell**

Chair and Area 4 rep  
president.cupe.local2628@outlook.com

**Robert Crevier**

Area 5 rep  
rocrevier@yahoo.ca

**Terry Lynn Swynarchuck**

Area 1 rep  
swynarchuckterry@live.com

**Tina Gagnon**

Area 6 rep  
tinagagnon.steward.askaway@gmail.com

**Lina King**

Area 2 rep  
lina@cupe1065.ca

**Ashley Green**

Area 7 rep  
ashleybain@hotmail.ca

**Teffany Josephs**

Area 3 rep  
teffanyj.cupe145@gmail.com

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